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# US gets look at Soviets' war materiel

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WASHINGTON — US intelligence officials have been embarrassed by an American adventurer who recently returned from Soviet-occupied Afghanistan with items of Russian military hardware believed never before seen in the West.

These include what appears to be a nerve-gas filter, a hand-held missile launcher, sticks of an incendiary material similar to napalm, and several rounds from the new Soviet assault rifle, the AKS 74.

These items, plus several hundred color slides showing evidence of the effectiveness of Afghan guerrilla tactics against Soviet armor, were brought to Washington by a former US Marine Corps sergeant, Galen Geer, at the end of an assignment to Afghanistan for "Soldier of Fortune," a monthly magazine written by, for and about mercenaries.

Geer, who insists he is not a mercenary but a free-lance journalist, gave a detailed briefing to Rep. William Dickinson (R-Ala.), a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

Impressed by Geer's account, Dickinson called in senior officers of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) — the Pentagon's equivalent of the CIA — who reportedly admitted that it was substantially correct and that the gas filter was now in their possession, courtesy of Geer and his publisher-editor, Robert K. Brown.

"It's a very real concern to me if, as it seems, our intelligence community has been unable to gather as much information as a free lance like Mr. Geer," Dickinson said in an interview. "I can't tell whether the CIA knows any more than the DIA, but I've asked them to come in and tell me what they do know. I'd be very concerned if I found they didn't know as much as this man does."

He added: "What particularly concerns me is the evidence of Soviet use of gas in Afghanistan. If the intelligence community can now confirm that the Russians are using gas, it should be made public and Congress should respond by appropriating the necessary funds to acquire a defensive capability, as well as an offensive capability for deterrent effect."

Geer, who lives in Canon City, Colo., spent 11 days in April with the Hezbi-i-Islami Moslem nationalist guerrillas — or Mujahiddin, as they call themselves — in the Pakitia Province of Afghanistan, south of Kabul, the capital.

He was searching for proof that the Russians, as persistently reported, have been using a knockout nerve gas against the guerrillas, and he believes he has found it — in the bulky shape of a filter that he removed from the air-intake system of a damaged Soviet scout car.

"It weighed about 80 pounds, and we lugged it back with us, more than 60 miles, into Pakistan," Geer said. "It's now in the hands of an agency of the US government, and we're supposed to get a detailed report from them when they have examined it."

"I think analysis will show that the Russians have been using nerve gas, as the Mujahiddin allege."

If, in fact, the filter has been used operationally, it may also permit analysis of the chemical composition of the gas, which would be of great importance in finding ways to counter it.

Geer also claims to have brought back a new Soviet weapon whose existence has been rumored for some time but never verified. This is a miniature missile-launcher, which Geer calls "the tube weapon." Unlike the gas filter, this has not been turned over to US authorities.

According to Geer it is now being examined and evaluated by unofficial weapons specialists.

Color slides of the "tube weapon" in the hands of Hezbi-i-Islami's mili-

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